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24 January 1980

West Europe Report

(FOUO 4/80)



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WEST EUROPE REPORT

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COUNTRY SECTION

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

COMMENTARY ON ARIANE FLIGHT, GROUND TEST SUCCESSES

Paris AIR & COSMOS in French 3 Nov 79 pp 37,40

[Article by K.I.: "'Ariadne's* Clew'"]

[Text] In the few weeks since the first launching of Ariane at the Guyanese Space Center, the press commentaries in the wake of this event have, in general, been taking on an increasingly optimistic tone that is disturbing to the experts. We have received, from an expert with long experience in this field, a very interesting communication that we feel should be brought to the attention of our readers.

Every technological realization of any significant complexity requires very extensive testing in the course of its development. The final configuration of the product of this development cannot be determined until it has gone through this phase of testing and debugging. No matter how extensive accumulated knowledge may be in advanced technological fields, this method of "trial and error" remains indispensable. The product of advanced technology that can be designed entirely "on paper" simply does not exist. This is especially true of the aeronautical and space technologies.

The development of an airplane involves hundreds of hours of flight testing to explore its actual flight environment, and to make final adjustments to its systems and quite often to its basic design.

These flight tests proceed in successive stages of added complexity under increasingly difficult conditions, until the entire environment has been covered and all systems are operationally perfect.

With rockets, it is different. Only their ground tests can be conducted in successive stages, gradually bringing the different systems under progressively more complex conditions. Their flight tests, their launchings,

* Translator's note: King Minos's daughter in Greek legend: Ariane in French, Ariadne in English.

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however, are "all or nothing" situations insofar as concerns time and space constraints on the conduct of the tests: real time, total environment, and all systems functioning simultaneously.

The entire study of performance under actual flight conditions that is divided into progressive stages over hundreds of flight hours in arriving at the final design of an airplane is compressed into a few minutes in the case of rockets, under "roll call," that is, under full operational, conditions, there being no possibility of progressively phasing them in. Whereas in the case of a plane a test flight can be interrupted at will in the event of a malfunction, and resumed later, a malfunction or technical deviation during the flight testing of a rocket must be resolved by an interruption having all the earmarks of a setback. The technical result in both cases is nevertheless the same: detection (by telemetering) of a malfunction or of a technical deviation on the basis of which a corrective change can be applied to further the final design process.

It follows that a substantial number of launchings should be necessary to "flight test" rockets, the number of interrupted flights (setbacks, according to the press) being high at the start of this phase of the design process and tapering off as final design is approached. And the larger, that is, the more complex, the rocket, the larger will be the number of such interrupted flights. In the case of giant rockets like the Ariane, this approach is not feasible because of the high cost of a launching. This is why ground tests, leading to a final "evaluation," are exploited to the utmost, using flight simulation techniques as much as possible. Such simulation, however, can never be more than an approximation, and even then, of known and predictable environmental conditions. The exploration of actual environmental conditions and their unpredictable effects (unpredictable by definition, hence not simulatable) remains necessarily a function of flight tests.

The entire problem of the rocket design process boils down to this dilemma: whereas the very "all or nothing" nature of the testing process calls for a significant number of test flights, their high cost compels compression of that number down to a very few launchings.

The design task is excruciatingly difficult even when it includes acceptance of a certain number of "setbacks" as normal (on the assumption that the technical objective, namely, identification of the fault and its correction, will be achieved for each launching). It becomes even more taxing if the allowable number of final-design flight tests is fixed in advance. Strictly speaking, this number should be continually revised, based on the actual results of each flight, and their scheduling also revised in accordance with actual progress of the tests.

All of this is evident and well known. And yet...a reading of the articles and commentaries that preceded the first of the four (only) Ariane flight tests does not leave one with this impression. Tones make music. And the

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tone of these commentaries is one of disturbing optimism--as if these four flight tests are supposed to do nothing more than confirm that the ground test evaluation has already achieved the final design objective: an operational rocket.

No. Not until the completion of the necessary test flight launchings is the laborious final design process achieved, after having eliminated successively the malfunctions which the ground test evaluation--because of its inherent limitations, no matter how fully exploited they may be--has not been able to detect.

The course and conduct of these test flight launchings must obey the implacable laws of the technology, which are not known to the general public. The public must therefore be given to understand the difference between these four test launchings and the first operational launching. Stress needs to be put on the objective that has been set for these test launchings, which is that two of the four launchings must prove successful for the Ariane rocket to be declared operational, and on the fact that only if this objective is attained can the Ariane program be deemed to have proceeded according to plan.

Let us not repeat the errors of the "Europa," from whose technical mistakes "Ariane" has benefited in full. It is time now to also learn the lesson of its public relations mistakes: to make the public and the officials aware in advance that two successful shots out of four would be an excellent result, that the addition of one or two supplementary shots would in no way be abnormal, and that a total success on the very first shot would be nothing short of an exceptional feat.

It would be exceedingly regrettable were the Ariane program to be suddenly judged a failure, despite a remarkable prior advance through its testing phase, solely as a result of ignorance on the part of its judges regarding these realities, for lack of prior information.

This is the thread that holds Ariane's [Ariadne's] future in suspense...

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COUNTRY SECTION

CANADA

COMMUNIST LEADER COMMENTS ON POLICY, UNITED STATES

PA142257 Havana PRELA in Spanish 1350 GMT 13 Jan 80 PA

[Article by Alberto Rabilotta]

[Text] William Kashtan, secretary general of the Communist Party of Canada, has stated that the party's 24th convention outlined very clear positions regarding national and international affairs. In an interview given to PRENSA LATINA at the end of the convention held recently in Toronton, Kashtan pointed out the clear positions adopted with regard to the struggle for peace and noted the need for Canada to withdraw from NATO and the North American Air Defense Agreement [Acuerdo Norteamericano de Defensa Aerea].

Kashtan noted: "The convention denounced the dangerous maneuvers of the administration of U.S. President James Carter and of the Chinese leadership aimed at inciting anti-Sovietism and weakening detente to return to the cold war, which is so dangerous to peace and security in the world."

The convention also adopted a strong position regarding Canada's internal situation, Kashtan noted. It called for work to attain the unity of the working class and the democratic forces and to strengthen the struggle against multinational corporations, he added.

Kashtan said that the delegates put special emphasis on the need for uniting the working class with the democratic forces to protect achievements despite the efforts of monopolies to dump on their backs the effects of the present economic crisis.

He stated: The workers are struggling again and our objective is to help them defend themselves more effectively and to work for new forms of struggle in other directions and for a new government.

Kashtan predicted that neither the Liberal Party nor the Progressive Conservative Party will obtain a majority in the 18 February elections and said he trusts the most important result of this will be a stronger voice in parliament for the working class and the democratic forces.

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Kashtan said that Canada is now at a crossroad in its relations with the United States, a country he characterized as a sinking ship that continuously clashes with more difficulties.

He said: The Carter administration has dangerously drifted away from the detente policy and is heading toward an attitude of confrontation and arms race. Faced with the U.S. position regarding the Afghanistan events, the Canadian prime minister, instead of criticizing it, supported the U.S. President.

Kashtan stated: The Canadian Government, instead of cautioning Carter against a cold war and his almost war-like attitude, just told President Carter: "Me too." Kashtan went on to ask: Why does Canada have to agree with the United States and refuse to sell wheat to the Soviet Union to weaken its relations with the Soviet Union?

This attitude does not benefit the Canadian people nor does it favor peace or security in the world and it does not have the support of the majority of the people and for this reason it should be rejected, Kashtan affirmed.

He added: Because of the dangerous path taken, it is required that all the peace-loving forces in the world adopt more forceful actions to safeguard and defend peace.

Kashtan noted: Canada must not tie itself to a sinking ship but must be guided toward an independent policy of commerce and peace based on consolidated relations with the socialist countries and the recently liberated nations to promote and strengthen its own interests.

Kashtan also denounced continentalism (an energy market project integrated by Canada, the United States and Mexico) as an effort to integrate the economies, policies and military affairs of those countries to adapt them to the objectives of the U.S. Government.

Kashtan said that continentalism is a proposal aimed at obtaining Canadian and Mexican oil, gas and other natural resources so that the United States can solve its problems at the expense of Mexico and Canada.

The implementation of that project would finish off the Canadian industries and turn the country into a supplier of raw materials and a buyer of products manufactured in the United States.

He stressed: There is no future for Canada with that type of proposal and there will be no jobs for the workers. For this reason, he added, we--and I would say the majority of the Canadian people--are opposed to continentalism.

Regarding the development of the nonaligned countries movement, Kashtan said that it has given a new scope to the struggle against imperialism because it has united various types of governments and countries with different levels of progress. Kashtan pointed out the importance of the sixth non-aligned summit held in Havana.

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COUNTRY SECTION

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

INDUSTRY LEADER VON AMERONGEN: AID UNITED STATES AGAINST IRAN

Hamburg STERN in German 6 Dec 79 p 196

[Interview with Otto Wolff von Amerongen, president of the Federation of Chambers of German Industry and Commerce, by Manfred Przybilski, STERN editor: "Khomeini's Anathema Can Affect Us, Too"; date and place of interview not given]

[Text] [Question] Herr Wolff, in the economic war between Iran and the United States, you, as an influential industrialist from an uninvolved country, have taken sides and called for solidarity with America.

[Answer] Now, of course, my purpose is not to be a hero. But in certain situations one simply must show his flag and declare his colors.

[Question] What does that mean in practice?

[Answer] My demand to show solidarity with the United States consists specifically in the fact that the Western world not buy any oil from Iran that was destined for U.S. consumers and is now floating across the Atlantic in tankers.

[Question] But, of course, charity begins at home in an emergency.

[Answer] That would be short-sighted. Industrial nations are extremely dependent upon one another in regard to the overall oil supply. Anyone can get into difficulties and must then be able to rely on the support of one's partners.

[Question] But solidarity, strictly speaking, would mean that even the FRG would impose a boycott on Iranian oil.

[Answer] That would be going too far, and I have a low opinion of embargos.

[Question] To UN Secretary-General Waldheim the conflict between Iran and the United States has precipitated the greatest international political danger since the Cuban crisis. Is it not frivolous to play with fire around the Near East powder keg with flaming appeals?

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[Answer] Apart from our solidarity in regard to oil, there are no measures which would make the bilateral relationship between Iran and the FRG worse and would intensify the situation in the Near East trouble-spot.

[Question] That could change quickly. The FRG has been involved in the economic war ever since Iranian capital investments in the Krupp conglomerate were seized by the U.S. Morgan Guaranty Bank.

[Answer] That is unfortunately the result of a perhaps precipitate measure. If a debtor--in this case Iran--is in default with its interest payments, then the U.S. banks have the option of interpreting this as a refusal to repay and of demanding immediate payment of the total amount. Thus, they want to protect themselves on all sides immediately.

[Question] Can you preclude the possibility that Khomeyni's anathema can also affect the FRG?

[Answer] Heavens above! As far as I can see, in the past few weeks so many irrational and unexpected things have taken place in Iran, even that can still happen.

[Question] How many German merchants and technicians would possibly be in danger then?

[Answer] At present we do not have a clear overview of the number of persons from the FRG who are still there. Recently there was a strong reduction in the German colony. Naturally, skilled workers must continue to take care of current projects.

[Question] The building site at the atomic power plant in Bushir has already been shut down. Will still other installations of German firms that are under construction be put in mothballs?

[Answer] The Iranian government will have to decide that. To date I have heard nothing of the sort. The jobs are being continued to the extent that current troubles allow. In any case, a mass exodus would be the wrong reaction.

[Question] Nonetheless, DM #8 billion are at stake which Iran still has to pay to German companies.

[Answer] That is only the total of the industrialization projects that were financed on a long-term basis with credits, projects which are being realized there by large German firms....

[Question] ...and are protected by state guarantees from Bonn. In addition, there are demands on Iran from current German deliveries running in the millions without state guarantees.

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[Answer] Correct. For example, my company regularly delivers tin sheeting to Persia. It exports without export guarantees, as do most companies in normal commerce. As far as I know, the Iranian refusal to pay debts concerns bills that are payable in dollars. I do not think that the government in Tehran is stopping payments generally. That would be suicide. Then there would be no one who would sell Iran even a piece of chalk.

[Question] German exports to Iran have declined by 63 percent this year. Is big business with Persia a thing of the past for German companies?

[Answer] Let's not go into whether it was every very extensive business. But naturally, it is true that German businesses in Iran are affected, and there is the threat of substantial reductions in export orders. It does not require a prophetic gift to recognize that in the near future we can no longer anticipate any large deals with Iran.

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FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

SCHMIDT ACTS TO IMPROVE FLIGHT SAFETY OVER FRG

Hamburg STERN in German 6 Dec 79 pp 240-241

[Article by Harry Drewes: "Chancellor Clears Up the Skies"]

[Text] The FRG has the most dangerous air space in all Western Europe. Now Helmut Schmidt intends to put an end to the quarrel between civilian and military air traffic controllers.

The American news magazine TIME warned its readers that the air space over the FRG is the "most dangerous in western Europe." No doubt true, since the German sky is crammed full. NATO pilots leave their vapor trails between Flensburg and Constance, the largest private air fleet on the continent is hustling about here, and the scheduled and chartered planes have to try to find a place for themselves somewhere in between.

Masters over this chaos are the air traffic controllers. It is their job to ensure safe flights, take-offs and landings. In the process, not only the crowded air space causes them problems, but also a homemade mess on the ground: Civilian and military air traffic controllers are quarreling over who has the say in the sky.

Sometimes the civilians and military sit side by side and provide the same service, sometimes they have divided the sky with an invisible fence. In that case then, each is responsible only for his side. This approach is not only absurd, it is also dangerous. In the period between 1973 and 1976 there were 22 collisions over the FRG. Near-collisions number in the hundreds every year.

One person who for many years has been preaching uniform flight supervision is Chancellor Helmut Schmidt. When he was senator for the interior in Hamburg, he ridiculed the fragmentation in the air traffic control service and warned of the consequences. Now he has dictated to his two responsible ministers, Apel for defense and Gscheidle for transport, how the skies over the FRG are to be made safer.

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Schmidt wants to set up an integrated federal office for air traffic control which will be responsible for both the civilian and military sectors. It is to be under the minister for transport. Technical control over the office will be by a supervisory board which will be staffed in equal numbers from both ministries and will only be able to make unanimous decisions. The president of the office will be a civilian, his deputy a member of the military.

Thus, Schmidt is basically following the recommendations of the civilian air traffic controllers. For years they have been demanding uniform air traffic control for all air traffic. Their arguments are logical, and they would have long since achieved their goal if in 1973 they had not stabbed themselves in the back with their slowdown. When air traffic was paralyzed at that time because the controllers worked strictly according to the book, they not only brought the entire nation of vacationers down on their backs, they also provided the military people with the excuse to classify the civilians in the towers as a safety risk.

The Ministry for Defense was then dreaming only of air traffic control by soldiers. Then everything could have been controlled according to the principle of command and obedience; a slowdown would have been ended by a terse command.

The civilian controllers, gathered around their "Association of German Air Traffic Controllers," even at the end of last week considered the military solution to be the most likely arrangement, for ever since the slowdown the government has been taking a hard line against the controllers with disciplinary actions and suits for damages.

But Schmidt the tactician still prefers the civilian solution and wants to implement it by next summer; this surely stems in part from the fact that there will be an election in 1980. He can hardly expect his party and voters to militarize a sector of public service without an emergency. And anyway, the chancellor has an ace up his sleeve: If the civilians slow down again, he can order the military to put on extra shifts.

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FDP'S HIRSCH URGES LAND ELECTORAL PACT WITH CDU

Hamburg STERN in German 6 Dec 79 pp 200-201

[Article by Alfred Welti: "Emergency Slaughter Instead of Dismissal"]

[Text] Burkhard Hirsch, North Rhine-Westfalian minister of the interior, is to become Land chairman of the FDP and put the desolate party back on a steady course.

The party of the liberals is "in a higher sense open"--that is how Horst Ludwig Riemer enjoyed announcing it; he is the recently sacked FDP Land chairman and minister of economics in North Rhine-Westfalia. His party friends in Solingen have now appeared open in a lower sense.

Boldly, as if there were nothing to learn from Riemer's sudden end, they went about forging an election alliance with the CDU for the Landtag election on 11 May 1980: In one of the two Solingen election districts an FDP man was supposed to give up his candidacy in favor of a Christian Democrat, and, in return, in the second district a liberal was to seek a direct mandate with the support of the CDU. The FDP leadership in Duesseldorf, however, put a stop to the horse-trading at the last second.

The conniving in Solingen against the SPD coalition partner shows in what sort of desolate condition the largest Land association of the liberals reveals itself to be scarcely a year before the Bundestag election. For not only the FDP rank-and-file got drunk on the crackpot idea. Even Peter Eykmann, the designated FDP Landtag caucus manager, praised the idea of scrounging a few votes at the expense of the Sozi's [Social Democrats]. The liberal applauded it as a "very interesting blueprint."

Land Minister of the Interior Burkhard Hirsch towers like an oak above such Free Democrat underbrush. His position vis-a-vis the social-liberal alliance is always one of discipline, straight thinking, often inconvenience, but always loyalty. This weekend, at the FDP Land Party Congress in Meunster, he will learn whether any success can still be scored with the North Rhine-Westfalian FDP.

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Following Riemer's fall, Hirsch must stand for election among the delegates as Riemer's successor, as obligated by federal leader Hans-Dietrich Genscher. But Minister Hirsch cannot expect an ideal result. Too often he has frustrated the opportunistic machinations of his party brothers. In addition, he is not exactly what people call a politician who draws.

This Hirsch, the complicated man, was given popular Liselotte Funcke, the party's tax expert, as a running mate. Bravely she gave up the honor of Bundestag vice-president and promised to remain in Land politics even if the liberals should once again be found on the opposition benches. Last week she took over Riemer's deserted Ministry of Economics. She is to enter the Landtag campaign as a leading candidate. Achim Rohe, RDP president in Duesseldorf, is happy about this "dream couple." Everyone would like Frau Funcke as a mother-in-law."

The ideal mother-in-law must go vote-gathering because Riemer repeatedly was unable to keep his mouth shut. At a drinking party with journalists at the beginning of November, he had blabbed personnel decisions without having discussed them in advance with party and caucus committees. He called SPD Minister-President Johannes Rau "a bottle," with whom, at the most, it would be possible to get through half a legislative session. Even in Bonn--as parties to the discussion recall--the "change" is said to be overdue, and then it would be only proper if he were to replace "pipe Verheugen" in the office of the FDP general secretary. "It was not an execution," said an insider about the Riemer dismissal, "it was an emergency slaughter."

Hirsch, the proper one, had, however, up to that point continually refused to organize a putsch against Riemer with whom he has been associated since Young Democrat times. That could now be disastrous. The Free Democrats in the last North-Rhine Westfalian Landtag election managed a full 6.7 percent. The question is how many voters will switch to the Greens and to the big parties because the childish FDP hopscotch has simply gotten too stupid for them.

If the liberal mini-war in Muenster continues and the divisiveness of the party is clearly renewed, then, of course, the change in the trend hoped for by Riemer will come sooner and in a form different from what suits his party friends. Then the RDP could fly right out of the Landtag following the May elections. Result: The CDU, to date the strongest party group in the Landtag, would take over the government--a situation which, a half year before the Bundestag election, would be like a signal to Bonn.

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FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

METALWORKERS UNION PREPARES FOR STRIKE ACTION

Hamburg STERN in German 6 Dec 79 pp 202-205

[Article by Dieter Straubert and Heiko Tornow: "Strike Tips From England"]

[Text] The Metalworkers Union is getting ready for future work disputes with full treasuries and new tactics.

Inquiries from the factories are mounting up: "Are we going to strike this time?" Among the members of the Metalworkers Union it has already been established that the upcoming wage talks will not come off without a labor dispute. However, the question has not yet been clarified for them in which of the 16 wage sectors the metalworkers will be asked for a strike ballot and called out in front of the factory gates in case the employers are prepared for only modest wage increases.

Since Hamburg's district manager Otto vom Steeg has already declined ("not this year!"), since his colleague in Essen, Kurt Herb, is still licking his wounds from the steel strike in January that was a failure and since Franz Steinkuehler, the fighter from Stuttgart, received a strike prohibition from Eugen Loderer, head of the Metalworkers Union ("It will not do for just one district always to consume the strike funds of the entire organization"), everything points to a wage dispute in Hesse.

The 2 million organized metalworkers do not intend to be content with small potatoes this winter. In the metalworking plants the shop stewards have already listed their demands: "We want 12 percent, we demand 10, we shall get 8."

The employers, meanwhile, have been arming themselves with counterarguments. If the trade unions come in with reference to the high rate of inflation, then the employers intend to counter by saying that "we cannot be charged for the income of the sheiks and the enormous profits of the multinational oil companies." According to their calculations, more than 5 percent just is not in the cards, for in 1980 the metalworkers received one additional day of vacation anyway and a bonus added to their vacation money. That already burdens the employers with 0.9 percent of the wage costs and must be taken into consideration by the Metalworkers Union.

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Wage politicians in the workers organization predict that "there is going to be a row, then!" They do not want to be charged for the 6-week vacation for everyone that they obtained in the 1979 strike: "After all, 1979 is no longer of any significance to the union in the matter of wage policy. We demand more pay for 1980" (this from a board member of the Metalworkers Union).

It was only with difficulty that Eugen Loderer this fall had throttled the vigorous "add-on discussion" at the source: "That takes the necessary pressure off the real wage negotiations." Loderer's tactics resulted in the fact that the metalworkers have even greater expectations, for the welders, lathe operators and fitters see the "reasonable wage settlements," which were highly praised in the spring (4.3 percent for 13 months), as long since eaten up by high price increases (5.7 percent in November).

It is of small help that the works councils in many companies negotiated additional bonuses added to the Christmas money from their bosses: The roughly 100,000 employees at the BASF [Baden Aniline and Soda Factory] conglomerate in Ludwigshafen are receiving a bonus amounting to 160 percent of a month's income. Volkswagen is again paying a seniority allowance of between DM #100 and 525 in addition to the Christmas money (up to DM #1,088) and the 13th month's salary. At Ford in Cologne there is an extra check for DM #440 and at Opel in Bochum und Ruesselsheim one for DM #250. Alois Schwarz, chairman of the works council at the MBB Messerschmitt-Boelkow-Blohm Aircraft Company, also has reason to be happy because "we have managed to get DM #500 extra Christmas money for the 24,000 members."

Of course, the executive board of the Metalworkers Union does not take seriously isolated wage demands ranging as high as 17 percent (for example, a North German elevator company), but it is a different story with the reports from the Mercedes shops: "At least double digits and more for the lower wage groups." At Opel in Ruesselsheim, the largest metalworking plant in Hesse, the 1,000 shop stewards came on strong for "DM #250 for everyone." That would mean a 14-percent increase in wages.

On the other hand, the Gesamtmetall employers organization is hoping for more restraint and believes it has already detected symptoms of same. According to a spokesman for the employers, the union recommendations have gone down in recent weeks. In addition, Gesamtmetall is hoping for the help of the Social Democrats. Because, according to the calculations of the employers, the comrades in the factories will do everything they can in order to spare their Chancellor Schmidt a strike in an election year.

The two sides agree on one point only: "These will be short wage talks." The reason is that employers and union are signing a new arbitration agreement this week. The old one had been terminated by the Metalworkers Union. In order to reach a new settlement at all, Gesamtmetall had to make an important concession: The trade union is permitted to "make smoke" with wildcat strikes even during current wage negotiations.

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A further measure with which the Metalworkers Union plans to sharpen its strike weapon, dulled as the result of lockouts, is that future labor disputes are to be conducted in such a way that the damage is as great as possible for Gesamtmetall; the costs incurred by the union are to be as low as possible. Hans Janssen, the board member responsible for wage questions, during a recent trip to England picked up tips on tactics from his British colleagues, who are otherwise quite disdained because they are always on strike: "For example, it would be possible to strike only Mondays or Wednesdays for weeks at a time." Something like that would disrupt factory peace more seriously than any of the usual German labor disputes which to date have been clean and orderly.

In order to fill the strike fund in time for any event, the Frankfurt Central Office of the Metalworkers Union is calling upon its 2.7 million members to pay in on a stepped-up basis. In fact, the members were also forced by an "Operation Honesty in Contributin" to pay to the union the member's contribution of one percent of gross wages, an amount set by statute. At the Wolfsburg Volkswagen factory 1,200 workers and employees thereupon surrendered their membership books with indignation--but a good 400 returned remorsefully after their initial anger.

Wage expert Janssen says: "We are not afraid of a strike." The Social Democrat also does not want to hear of any concerns for Helmut Schmidt that have to do with election tactics: "We are negotiating so early in the year that it won't help him and it won't hurt him."

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COUNTRY SECTION

FRANCE

COMMENTARY ON U.S. POLICY TOWARD ISLAM, IRAN

Paris LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR in French 26 Nov 79 pp 46-47

[Editorial by Jean Daniel: "The United States Under Siege by Islam"]

[Excerpts] Since last Thursday, for the world's leaders and strategists, the question is no longer whether the United States will meet the Iranian challenge but rather where, when and how they will do it.

Initially, the dilemma was save the hostages or save face. Jimmy Carter's coolheadedness during this period impressed the world as it did the American public opinion. One then hoped for, indeed from this fact, a solution negotiated under the discrete pressure of Tehran's allies and with the help of the secret good offices of the Soviet Union. But once it became a question of a trial inflicted on the U.S. Embassy staff members still kept hostage, then worry overtook world opinion because anger had taken over the United States. Wednesday, the polls indicated that public opinion and Congress would be unanimous in the event of an intervention.

In addition, one was to learn that the partisans of firmness were found also outside the United States. Often even in the ranks of those who denounce American hegemony: such as Arab heads of state attending the conference in Tunis and who, themselves Moslem, were not afraid of citing "the terrible plague of Islamic fanaticism." But also Europeans, French and Germans, whose governments had nonetheless just shown the greatest caution in solidarity with Washington.

Here, we are not dealing, at least not dealing solely, with the usual doubletalk of politicians. This involves the serious matters of geopolitics. The world is so constituted, even today and despite what one refers to as "multipolarity," that, when one of the two superpowers overly displays its vulnerability and passivity, the entire planet goes out of kilter: it is as if seized with vertigo. This means that a certain order in the world, despite the monstrous leaks that it covers up, is seemingly still provided by a balance between Moscow and Washington.

So, then, this response? The decision on it has been studied all the more carefully since they are convinced in Washington that they had better take

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the students and Khomeyni seriously: the trial of the hostages will indeed take place; it will demonstrate that certain of the diplomats are in the CIA. Demagoguery intended for the naive--everyone knows that all the embassies, and especially the American and Soviet ones, house members of the secret services, generally baptised commercial or social or military attaches. Those are the rules. Being a spy is not prohibited. What is prohibited is getting caught. The prophet Khomeyni doesn't agree with this code? The Americans intend to show him that it is the masters of the game who set the rules.

For the moment, it is a question of aircraft carriers joining others in the Gulf of Oman, near the Iranian coast; of naval blockades of Iran to prohibit tanker traffic; of bombing the Abadam refinery or the mining of this or that strait. The very fact that the White House encourages speculation on the forms of a military reply is already of significance. This shows that, far from fearing a Soviet intervention, the Americans have an interest in stirring up the specter of a destabilization of the region. It is also a warning to this revolutionary Third World, and in particular the Islamic one, where the prophet Khomeyni is busy stoking all the fires available for a veritable holy war against the United States. The Islam of the people, the poor and the prophets is laying a siege of hatred around America.

Jimmy Carter was not expecting this role which history has laid on him. His toughest opponents agree that his ideal is more to make the United States loved than feared. He presented himself as a defender of the rights of man, going even so far as to denounce--and who remembers it?--both Iran and Brazil during his election campaign, promising that there would not be any American citizen in a situation of fighting anymore against the freedom of other peoples. In fact, never has the United States been less interventionalist. (And there were Americans and Westerners to reproach them for it: didn't Giscard try to pick up where Jimmy Carter left off in defending the West in Africa?) It is nevertheless this same Carter who is reaping what so many others have sown everywhere so assiduously before him.

Hatred is never pretty to see. There was, nevertheless, a sort of deliverance in the hysteria of those televised mobs in Tehran who cried for blood. The American flag shredded, dirtied and burned; the picture of Carter burned next to that of the shah; the curse against "Satan," the forces of evil, everything showed the unleashing of passions too long pent up, repressed, contained. Where did these come from? What a strange story! The nation of refuge for all the dissidents of the world is at the same time the one which entire continents deem to be oppression incarnate. A classic contradiction and one that is good for a book a day in the United States. But usually it was whenever some university professor visited Latin America or those bordering countries where the curse, according to a Mexican proverb still quoted, comes from those who are "so far from God, so close to the United States." To these countries, everyone knows, Jimmy Carter could no doubt resign himself. But in the Arab or Moslem countries, and especially in this period when the Israeli influence appears on the decline, why this explosion of hatred?

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Suddenly, all at once, the demnable face of Reza Mohammed Pahlavi coalesces in the mind of the Iranians with that of a president of the United States, one who did not deserve it but who could not by himself erase a terribly burdened heritage. A heritage where the prodigalities of Washington for the kings, the princes, the feudal lords and the president gave rise among the people to an ever less bearable quarrel of humiliations and hatreds. From time to time, a reaction would explode. 1973: seizure of hostages at the Saudi Arabian embassy in Khartoum, capital of the Sudan. The United States ambassador is assassinated. In 1976: assassination of an American ambassador in Beirut. In 1979: assassination of an American ambassador in Kabul. Without counting all the sermons, all the demonstrations, all the professions of faith from the doctrinaires of Islamic socialism in Syria and in Libya, in Afghanistan and in Pakistan. When the most intelligent of memoir writers and one of the most prestigious of diplomats, a man of the breadth of Henry Kissinger, does not understand that loyalty with regard to the shah is in reality a disavowal with regard to the people, it means that there is something awry among the specialists in geopolitics. Kissinger begins his memoirs with a sentence that 'the United States has entered into a world where it is no longer the strongest, and it is a painful transition.' A pertinent comment but one which seems to be followed up only by a description of the relationships between military forces. Islam, the new superpower, is nowhere given its due.

For the moment, Jimmy Carter is forced to react like one besieged. He must break the blockade of scepticism, the coalitions of disdain, the assaults of defiance which his country receives, wipes off and endures with a sort of evangelical and shamefaced passiveness. But before him he has an adversary whose sole and unique weakness is his age. The Khomeyni phenomenon has but one president in recent history, and that is Gandhi.

One recalls the exasperation of Churchill in face of 'this dirty beggar who, displaying a bony and nauseating nudity, would oppose Great Britain.' Khomeyni is Gandhi plus oil and minus nonviolence. When he revokes the customs, the laws, the rules in the name of which he believes one half of the world has oppressed the other half; when he sets against the compromises the insane radicality of his attitude; when he preaches puritanism and even sectarianism...he strikes a responsive chord in all those who have been excluded from wealth, the victims of waste, all those whom the princes neglected to invite to the day of the great allotting of shares. Like all radical positions, that of Khomeyni has a logic which is clearly not that of life: around it hangs a scent of absoluteness and death. Unfortunately it is none the less fascinating for millions of victims of the industrial ideologies. Just as fascinating, moreover, as almost all the fascisms, so popular at their birth.

This Khomeyni, if he doesn't unleash a war, that is, and if he is stopped in time in his search for a deadly absolute, will perhaps have nourished this great self-questioning that one sees arising here and there among the super-greats--or those who, even yesterday, thought they were.

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COUNTRY SECTION

FRANCE

PCF RELATIONS WITH SOVIET, INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM

Paris L'EXPRESS in French 1 Dec 79 p 132

[Article by Branko Lazitch: "From Eurocommunism to Euro-Sovietism"]

[Text] Since 1974 two communist strategies have been in operation in Western Europe; the Soviet strategy, which aims at reinforcing the international position of the USSR; the strategy of several communist parties seeking a rapid entry into government.

The first has obtained undeniable results.

On the contrary, the second, that of the Western communist parties, has met everywhere with defeat.

Fortified by their success, the Soviets are elaborating new plans to neutralize Europe. On the other hand, the Portuguese, French, Italian and Spanish Communist Parties have no strategy ready for their immediate accession to power. In 1979, therefore, only one strategy offers some prospect for these "brother parties": it is not that of Eurocommunism, but that of the Soviet Union. The present task is to coordinate Moscow's entire European policy with the local policy of European communist parties. This synchronization is in progress and offers a new method of resolving a series of rather old problems, in particular that of the PCF, until recently the "enfant terrible" of the International after 1975.

The ties between the PCF and the international communist movement have been brought to the foreground by Georges Marchais. As early as December, 1978 Marchais stated before a group of four hundred communist intellectuals: "To wish to deliberately isolate our fight from that of other forces in the world struggling against capitalism and for socialism would be a serious mistake". At the last central committee, at the end of October 1979, the secretary general was even more explicit: unable to announce the victory of communism in France, he commended "the socialist transformation of humanity being fashioned today." This week he declared that the USSR has "suppressed oppression and exploitation." Back to square one!

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This position, forged not as a function of national communism or Euro-communism but rather from the point of view of Soviet-dominated international communism, was relegated to the background by the government's Common Program. This last policy was an attempt at a national means "to open the way for socialism in France." From the beginning, Moscow was closed, if not hostile, to this policy. Upon returning from Moscow, the socialist Lionel Jospin stated to the foreign press on 15 October: "The Kremlin authorities do not appear to wish to experiment with a union of the left in France."

On the other hand, these authorities hope to lead the majority of political forces, including the Socialist International, into a struggle against the "armaments race," which is the central theme of the new Soviet peace offensive.

On 1 October, Brezhnev received a delegation from the Socialist International in order to talk about disarmament. The 12 principal European socialist and social-democratic parties were represented, including the French Socialist Party. Then three weeks later, the same appeal to the social-democrats was made by the Politburo of the PCF, employing a language of unity which we have not heard from it for a long time; "The PCF wishes to create conditions favorable to the united action of democratic forces, especially the social-democratic parties...for such objectives as the struggle against the arms race." The social-democratic parties are called upon to become partners in foreign policy, although they are considered renegades when it comes to domestic policy.

Of course, the PCF does protest certain outrageous Soviet violations of human rights, but it is careful not to translate its indignation into political acts. For example, it has not demanded the withdrawal of soviet occupation troops nor decided to suspend relations with the authorities of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, which is responsible for the repression. Moreover, at L'HUMANITE's festival in September, stall No 57 at the international city was reserved for the Czechoslovak daily RUDE PRAVO. And the PCF rebuked Jean Francois-Roncet, French minister of foreign affairs, for having canceled his trip to Prague following the trials. Was this not "working against detente" on the part of the minister?"

A recent encounter between the PCF, represented by Charles Fiterman, and the PCSU, represented by Boris Ponomarev, had as its goal the development of cooperation between the two parties.

There is perfect agreement in the propaganda positions of Moscow and of the Western parties on the subject of Asia as well as Europe. As to the taking of hostages in Tehran, L'HUMANITE of 23 November condemned those who busy themselves by "denigrating the legitimate anger of those people who speak out against the United States government."

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COUNTRY SECTION

FRANCE

AIRBUS INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENTS AWAIT 1980 DECISION

Paris AIR & COSMOS in French 17 Nov 79 p 11

[Text] Last week, Mr Bernard Lathiere, managing director of Airbus Industrie, drew up the balance sheet of orders for A 300 and A 310 Airbus, the total of which is now approaching the break-even point of 400 planes. Sales in 1978 totaled 82 (69 firm orders and 13 options). As of 8 November 1979, sales for the year, from 1 January, had reached 215 planes (128 firm orders and 87 options). This total consists of 92 A 300's (67 firm orders and 25 options) and 123 A 310's (61 firm orders and 62 options). Mr Lathiere pointed out that the bringing out of the A 310 has in no way slowed the growth of A 300 sales.

Credibility Achieved

Whereas in 1970 Airbus's share of the world market for airliners was nil, its share of the world market in 1978 was 14 percent (in terms of value), and by the end of the first 10 months of 1979 it was 29.1 percent. Thus, in a more favorable market that has recovered its upward trend, the Airbus Industrie team has achieved credibility with the airlines. The negotiation of every major contract for the purchase of large-capacity planes now finds Airbus Industrie pitted against Boeing in the final round.

Airbus Industrie now realizes a profit on every plane it sells, permitting it to recover, from the 120th or 130th plane on, the initial losses suffered by the partners.* Mr Lathiere called attention to the fact that since Airbus Industrie has no compensative programs, it is at a disadvantage with respect to other airliner manufacturers that already have other established product lines in operation. This situation will be different when new programs can be undertaken with support from existing ones.

Thirty airlines have now opted for the A 300 and A 310 Airbus, with estimated long-term needs totaling 800-850 planes. Other airlines are sure to order Airbus. Thus, it is virtually certain that more than 1,000 of

* The selling price of an Airbus A 300 currently averages around \$35 million.

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these planes will be sold eventually. How then, Mr Lathiere asks, can one speak of an indifferent success when one-third of the world market for medium-range heavy-transport aircraft is about to be practically captured by Airbuses?

Not a Case of Euphoria

Mr Lathiere is by no means unaware of Airbus Industrie's relative capacity as compared with Boeing's. The European group currently produces three planes a month of a single type, whereas Boeing produces 28 a month of various types. But in the field of civil aircraft manufacture, relative positions of the manufacturers can change rapidly. Mr Lathiere recalls Boeing's position relative to Douglas's 30 years ago. Airbus Industrie is now concentrating on increasing its production rate, with a goal of 8-8.5 planes a month by 1984 and 10 planes a month by 1985. Within 7 years, it expects to have quintupled its current production rate. The fabrication cycle of a single plane covers a span of 3 and 1/2 years. And the goal that has been set will be the harder to achieve in a European social context that is less yielding than the American one. This context will require an increase from the present 17,000 to 35,000-40,000 employees assigned to the fabrication of Airbuses. This does not appear impossible, however, if one considers that the total number of persons currently employed by the Airbus Industrie partners is 150,000.

As more and more orders are accepted, delivery times become longer and longer. But this is also true for Boeing, although the production start-up time of the A 310 will be longer than that of the 767. McDonnell Douglas and Lockheed, with a greater currently available production capacity, could to some extent benefit from this situation. But I have not seen any report of orders placed on these manufacturers to date.

Three New Developments under Study

With regard to extending the gamut of Airbus Industrie's manufacturing activities, Mr Lathiere said that three projects are under study: a 200-passenger, 4-engined jetliner based on the design of the A 310, capable of being equipped with the CFM 56; a narrow-bodied, 2-engined, single-aisle plane also capable of using the CFM 56 (projects SA [Single Aisle] 1 and 2); and a 2-engined, heavy-transport plane which is an elongated version of the A 300 with a capacity of around 300 passengers (TA [Twin Aisle] 9). The latter project looms as a direct competitor of the large 3-engined liners of the DC-10 and TriStar types, compared to which its economy characteristics appear very favorable. It is already the object of very lively interest on the part of the clientele. It is a foregone certainty that Airbus Industrie cannot undertake all three of these projects concurrently. Its priorities will be determined by the market, and, as things now look, its decision should be forthcoming during the second half of 1980.

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Investments and Titanium

Asked about investments by the Airbus Industrie partners in gearing to meet the demand, Mr Lathiere replied that these investments continue, especially in Great Britain, where British Aerospace is having to provide the largest share of the funding, since the A 310 is being equipped with a wing of new design. The relative size of the investments being required of the French partners is about midway between those of the German and British partners.

Asked about the effects of the titanium shortage on the Airbus program, Mr Lathiere, who estimates the amount of titanium needed for the Airbus program to be around one ton per plane, felt that this shortage should not have any long-term effects on the program. Besides, it seems that European industry is in the process of equipping itself to achieve a degree of European self-sufficiency in the production of titanium metal sponge.

Emphasizing that the Airbus marketing effort continues, Mr Lathiere stated that in the course of the visit he will be making to Japan to discuss possible cooperation with Japanese industry in the construction of new planes, he plans to also visit China for talks with President Hua Guofeng, who, during his visit to Europe, had indicated considerable interest in the Airbus.

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COUNTRY SECTION

ITALY

U.S. BASE IN LA MADDALENA CREATING PROBLEMS FOR POPULACE

Turin LA STAMPA in Italian 13 Dec 79 p 15

[Article by Mario Guerrini: "Riots and Polemics at La Maddalena Around 'Nuclear Base'"]

[Text] La Maddalena. The presence of the U.S. bases has created many problems for the inhabitants of La Maddalena. Not only is there the fear of atomic pollution, but the American base has had negative effects because of the rise in prices and the heavy influence on tourist activity. Furthermore, the riots between American sailors and the peaceful Maddalena citizens are by now habitual and now there are also drugs which until some time ago were unknown on La Maddalena. The inhabitants of La Maddalena say they were imported by U.S. sailors.

There are moments of particular tension because of the presence of atomic submarines and the support ship "Gilmore." The leftist parties became spokesmen for the negative feelings of the people. But results were negligible: "Franco Tamponi, PSI [Italian Socialist Party] group leader in the City Council, said: "When 2 years ago there was the incident of the "USS Ray" submarine with the danger of atomic pollution, the reaction of the people was enormous. In less than 2 days we collected almost 4,000 signatures of citizens who demanded that the U.S. base at Santo Stefano be removed. But unfortunately nothing happened. The "Gilmore" is still there."

A completely different opinion was expressed by the mayor of La Maddalena, lawyer Gavino Canopoli, a Christian Democrat, who said: "If it is true that the city is a thermometer of the humor of the people, I must say that the American presence worries no one except for the positions taken by the more politicized groups which dramatize the problem. The inhabitants of La Maddalena have been used for centuries to coexisting with military personnel and I do not understand why it should be any different with the Americans. Here at La Maddalena, the Italian Navy puts about 12 billion lire into circulation each year which is spent for workers' salaries, civilian and military employees. If to this we add another 3 or 4 [billions] by the Americans, I do not see why this should be given up. There are at least 80 La Maddalena citizens who work with the American Navy and this is a positive fact if one considers how difficult it is today to find a job. Certainly

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there are negative aspects such as the housing shortage, but that problem should be overcome shortly. The project for the construction of 250 houses for families of American military personnel was approved once again after several changes and now it is awaiting the approval of the Ministry for Cultural Affairs."

The communists were very surprised by these statements since they considered that Canopoli certainly was not favorable to the American presence. Sebastiano Demuro, city secretary of the PCI said: "Just a few years ago Mayor Canopoli, in a very highly publicized effort, said he was willing to fight for the removal of the "Gilmore" if there was any suspicion of the slightest danger for the health of inhabitants."

As is known, an Italian Navy base has existed for many decades at Maddalena. The commander, Admiral Massimo Marandini, tries to attenuate the polemics and minimizes the problems: "I don't know how they can speak of an American military base since all the requirements for calling it such are lacking. Let us say that the 'Gilmore' is a repair ship for nuclear submarines and it is tied up at the NATO dock of Santo Stefano. Its presence is justified by precise bilateral agreements (within the framework of the Atlantic Pact) between Italy and the United States."

But leftist political leaders have no doubts about the meaning of the U.S. presence at La Maddalena. Salvatore Sanna, PCI group leaders and member of the regional committee for military service, replies: "The Santo Stefano nuclear base can be considered not only the fruit of a violent attack of prevarication against the provisions of our constitution, but also the first act of savage militarization of Sardinia by the United States which, even though in a reduced form, once more proposes other prevarications at Monte Arci (province of Oristano). American aggression and the parasitism demonstrated by the local DC in receiving the new colonizers with open arms has caused only trouble: In recent years La Maddalena has seen violent riots, a shortage of housing, the use of drugs."

Even the small businessmen and hotel keepers who at first were convinced they would make a lot of money have changed their minds. The proprietor of a well-known restaurant says: "They rarely come to us and probably because they are forced to come and are made to leave exaggerated tips. The truth is that the Americans are self-sufficient: With a tender that makes the trip to the supply center of Naples they can even get fresh bread. For the people of La Maddalena they have now merely become a burden, and in fact many soldiers are stationed at Palau (a coastal village in northern Sardinia). We have shown them many times that they are not welcome here."

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COUNTRY SECTION

ITALY

ARMORED UNITS PROPOSED FOR DEFENSE MODERNIZATION

Tactical Utilization, Deployment, Organization

Rome RIVISTA MILITARE in Italian May-Jun 79 pp 26-31

[Article by Gen Sandro Azais: "Tank Detachments"]

[Text] The process of unit modernization was characterized, among other things, by a constant increase in the number of tank detachments in relation to the real operational possibilities on national territory, to the point where it reached saturation levels in the most sensitive areas.

The issue of the M-60 tank and the effect deriving from the inclusion of "Leopard" tanks on the line considerably boosted the armored units in terms of armament, mobility, and endurance. This produced the need for better coordinating the operational requirements with "the real situation existing in the theater of operations."

The best step here--capable of providing greater freedom of maneuver for the mechanized and armored "tactical groups"--appears to begin by modifying the organizational structure of the minor detachments in order then to move on to the higher and middle echelons of the armored units in the light of economic requirements and the consequences of production costs.

This brief study is essentially intended to examine the advisability of this step by looking into the following aspects of the problem: operational environment; combat equipment; organizational formations; reorganization of armored units.

Operational Environment

The morphological features of the Italian operational environment and the progressive limitation imposed by the spread of residential areas, industrial areas, canals, and crops limit the employment of armored formations and point to their organization in the form of light, maneuverable tactical groups which can be easily commanded and which are spaced further and further apart.

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Even though the order of battle of the various formations, the succession of action in terms of time, the alternating spreadout and concentration of forces due to the effect of wartime developments seem to attenuate the space limitation imposed by the natural environment, one can say that the current ratio between forces and space--also taking into account the operational deployment of the detachments--entails a saturation which limits the employment possibilities and the chief characteristics attributed to armored units, sometimes wiping out the basic principles dictated by doctrine.

We must therefore try to work toward a considerable thinning-out of the overall density of tanks without however harming the operational possibilities of the major armored units.

Combat Equipment

The search for formations that can operate effectively in a certain theater of war obviously is based on the characteristics and performance of equipment and on suitable formations for employment.

The tactical formula, modernization of on-board systems and the characteristics which suggested the replacement of equipment currently in service through the adoption of the M-60 tank and the subsequent inclusion of the "Leopard" tanks will make it possible to fight at longer ranges with greater capacity for fire and movement.

These considerations underscore the need for reducing the tank units precisely in order to enable the commanders fully to utilize the tremendous power of fire and movement of the new fighting equipment.

Organic Formations

The Tank Company

The current tank company, consisting of a company HQ and three tank platoons, has one company HQ tank plus five tanks for each platoon, giving us a total of 16 tanks.

It is a minor unit featuring a weight and dimensions of particular significance whose employment on Italian territory is not always pleasant, not only when it constitutes a part of a grouping of forces but also when it must operate on its own.

As a matter of fact:

When in action, it covers a front of at least 1,200 m and a sector with a width between 3 and 4 km, which is the space necessary to assemble, combine, and coordinate the action of the individual platoons;

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In view of the broad spaces involved in an area such as the terrain available in Italy, with all of the subsequent limitations on observation--it entails major difficulties in visual command, a requirement which we cannot do without in order to impart to our operations the necessary tight pace and to accomplish recurring assignments;

It is rarely able to carry out coordinated "fire and movement" action by its platoons which move on a normally broad front which is almost as big as the effective range of the equipment involved, while most of the time those platoons are forced to alternate in terms of their individual initiative.

The above-mentioned difficulties also exist in terrain that is easier for tanks and experience demonstrates that there are only few cases where it is possible correctly to maneuver with more than two platoons forward.

If we then move on from our individual company to an examination of the "two companies," constituting the standard base of the armored tactical group, then the same difficulties obviously become even bigger.

This is why, before moving on to an examination of the tank platoon, we must consider the armored (or mechanized) tactical group and the effect which the current structure of the tank company has on that formation.

The Tactical Group

Recent trials and observations derived from field exercises demonstrated that the armored (or mechanized) tactical group on the battalion echelon, due to the increase in the number and weight of the components, has grown to the detriment of the requirement for timely action and maneuverability.

The dimensions in which the tactical group is deployed turn out to be about 11 km in depth and 7 km in width; here is what that means:

Difficulties, for commanders on all echelons, to coordinate and fit in assignments and formations in the available space;

Difficulties in employing the armored tactical group in the conventional combined form, featuring two tank companies, forward, and a consequent tendency toward setting up and employing minor units;

Difficulties in exercising command and in unit handling due to the employment of smaller groupings.

We must therefore seek an organizational structure for the tank company which will give us a "combat formation," within the scope of the company and the platoons, which will be suitable for effectively exploiting the "action areas" and "vacuums" on a battlefield. The solution of this problem can be found not only by thinning out the current structure of the tank platoon.

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The Tank Platoon

We just saw the difficulties connected with the employment of a company of 16 tanks and we might now briefly look at the five-tank platoon such as it is currently constituted organizationally.

This formation presents undeniable advantages, that is to say:

Sufficient substance so as to assure continuity of action;

Capability of guaranteeing the accomplishment of the mission through alternating "fire" and "movement" (in pairs)--within its own environment;

Suitability when it comes to playing the role of minimum unit absolutely required for operational employment (elementary unit).

On the other hand, their formation also presents obvious disadvantages, to wit:

It takes up a front of 500 m, in other words, so broad as to make it not always available and so as--by virtue of the nature of the terrain--not always to enable it to permit the unit commander effectively to control fire and movement;

It almost always calls for developed action with constant alternation of fire and movement by the pairs; this is an action in which different and conflicting requirements often produce the result of wasting rather than combining effects;

It makes it difficult for the platoon leader to control and correct fire for the purpose of keeping it united in terms of purpose and distributing it properly over the firing targets of the individual tanks;

It necessitates the paired arrangement for particularly important assignments, such as providing support for the constitution of patrols, road-blocks, etc.

It seems therefore a good to reduce the number of tanks in the platoon in order to get:

Platoons which will cover a less broad front and which will enable the platoon leader to provide more fruitful and appropriate leadership of movement and fire;

Lighter companies with smaller space requirements and, hence, with considerably broader and more fruitful employment possibilities;

Tactical groups which will be reliably mobile, flexible, and realistically dosable;

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Unity of command action even when the platoon is spread out (no longer operating in pairs) at roadblocks, in patrols, etc.

The solution calling for the four-tank platoon was already tested before the war with not at all encouraging results although the British Army recently adopted this solution.

As a matter of fact, the reduction by just one tank does not substantially reduce the overall weight of the platoon and deprives the platoon leader of many of his prerogatives by directly making him a part of one of the two pairs and creating uncertainty as to the definition of the formations and the position for the platoon leader himself.

The three-tank platoon today looks harmonious, fully functional, and in keeping with requirements. This structure as a matter of fact:

Guarantees easy and instinctive command: the two teamed-up tanks in practice operate by way of imitation and only have to flank or follow the command tank;

It involves a narrower front (300-400 m) which is easily available on Italian terrain;

It makes it possible to shift the sequence of fire and movement into the company setting with the advantage of better guaranteeing the rate of fire and its control;

It promotes a greater spreadout over the terrain;

It simplifies training.

Reorganization of Armored Units

After the structure of the company has been established and after its financial cost has been estimated in relation to the production and operating costs, including the first-line and second-line issues, one must establish the best way to insert it on the basis of considerations relating to operational employment and the real operational capacity of the battalion, also in the light of the personnel situation.

Considerations Relating to Employment

The current order-of-battle setup involves units which in peacetime are made up of armored or mechanized battalions alone which, in wartime or in a training situation, can be properly converted into tactically and logistically autonomous force complexes.

The latest tactical experiences stressed the obvious difficulty encountered by conventional major units in getting themselves organized rapidly and in

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a maneuverable manner; this is why units which are trained to operate in small nuclei, with strong individuality, aggressiveness, initiative, and autonomy have turned out to be more in line with those criteria. The Italian terrain is heavily broken up; it reveals rather little in terms of a "straightaway" run; these factors, plus the spaces in which the tank units are called upon to operate, only underscore and reinforce those concepts.

The considerations presented earlier relative to the natural environment, the organic formations, and the weight of the tactical group instead suggest the advisability of operating with smaller, previously constituted groups for combat operations so that, even in peacetime, we may already have armored units ready for immediate employment, flexible, maneuverable, suitable for in-depth operations repeated in terms of time and space.

Considerations Relative to the Real Operational Capability of Present-Day Battalions

Reorganization sprang from the fact that operational employment has priority over the organizational setup as such and this in turn introduced the need for raising the standing of the regimental unit (a noteworthy step forward) to the brigade level (a pre-established grouping). But in the light of lessons learned in the past and also in connection with the personnel situation, it seems a good idea to draw the first conclusions and to come up with some suggestions to make up for any possible shortages.

The current solution, in terms of the original idea, was supposed to have offered the following major advantages: drastic reduction of organic personnel; beefing up the detachments with personnel taken from the deactivation of the regiments; putting the battalion directly under brigade HQ without any intermediate links.

Although it is true that we get a more flexible setup, a careful review of the general situation today looking at the battalions will lead to the following considerations:

We did not get as much personnel out as we had hoped for since the establishment of the brigades took up many more men than we had anticipated;

As things stand now, the battalion must follow brigade HQ to no greater and no lesser a degree than was true of the now deactivated regiment but it no longer has a functioning HQ now which is why the commander is forced to devote too much time to paper work and that of course is to the detriment of the other decisively more important activities such as those concerned with training and personnel leadership;

The number of captains assigned and present for duty does not enable the [battalion] CO to detach any of them for duty with HQ and the assignment of more senior officers begins to create problems of seniority with relation to the commanders;

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One must also realistically take into consideration the number of men taken away from the tank crews and assigned to detachment and garrison house-keeping duties;

When it gives rise to a tactical group, the battalion becomes difficult to command since its HQ does not have sufficient facilities for the necessary control and coordination of static, dynamic, and fire actions which it is called upon to perform on modern battlefields both on the defensive and on the attack.

Conclusion

This study points up the need for adopting a solution for the makeup of armored units which, on the various echelons, will take into account the environmental features as well as the characteristics of available equipment, the economic resources we have available, in the light of the production and operating costs as well as the current availability of officer and NCO as well as enlisted personnel.

Tank Platoon

The three-tank setup is the one that best reconciles the requirements of employment and command and which at the same time guarantees the unit greater homogeneity and therefore more adequate fire and movement control.

Tank Company

Looking at the organizational chart for the tank company, after the reduction of its platoons from five tanks down to three tanks, the following solutions could be adopted (see organizational chart a [below]).

Solution A: make no changes in the current organizational setup and therefore have the following: one command tank plus three platoons of three tanks, each, giving us a total of 10 tanks.

While this organizational structure on the one hand eliminates all employment and command difficulties, as compared to the current situation, it does on the other hand reduce the number of tanks from 16 down to 10, thus limiting the overall power of the unit.

Solution B: increase the number of tank platoons from three to four and thus have available a total of 13 tanks (1 command tank and 4 platoons of 3 tanks, each).

This solution would offer the advantage of leaving the overall power of the tank company unchanged whereas, when it is part of an armored tactical group, it would have to yield one tank platoon to constitute a minor mechanized unit.

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Solution C: Insert, into the company, a "command nucleus," made up of the command tank and two reserve tanks. That would give the unit a total of 12 tanks.

In addition to giving the company a lighter structure and thus making it easier to command, this solution would guarantee a certain degree of sustenance for the effort to be made within the company itself and it would enable the commander to integrate and complete the action of the support platoon by boosting it with the action of his own command nucleus.

Table 1 shows an organizational comparison among the proposed solutions.

Tank Battalion

The most suitable structure--also taking into account the considerations relative to the real operational capacities of the present-day battalions--seems to be the one based on three tank companies.

In substance, compared to the current tank battalion with its 51 tanks, we could have the following:

A battalion of 33 tanks, specifically, three companies of ten tanks, each, one command nucleus with three tanks, giving us a saving of 18 tanks;

A battalion of 39 tanks, specifically, three companies of 12 tanks, each, one command nucleus with three tanks, giving us a saving of 12 tanks.

There are furthermore two special aspects which must be underscored because of the effect they may have on the organizational appearance of the tanks units. The setup suggested for the minor tank units does give the battalion greater mobility and flexibility but considerably reduces the overall personnel strength. This latter step may, on the one hand, give the commander more effective and far-reaching command action but, on the other hand, it clashes with the currently greater requirements for personnel employed for garrison and territorial housekeeping duties.

Hence the need--in order not to take personnel away from the tank crews and, therefore, in order not to limit the unit's operational capacity--for constituting, within the battalion, a platoon which will be qualitatively and quantitatively capable of providing all of the services, including garrison services.

The other aspect to be taken into account--no less important--pertains to the battalion CO. Among the lieutenant colonels, only 20% are promoted to the rank of colonel who, with the elimination of the regiment, is exclusively assigned now as deputy commander in a position, in other words, which does not enable him to express his own personality and make use of the career maturity he has achieved.

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It would therefore be desirable--as has already been done in other armies--to give the colonels command of battalions since that position can presently be considered the last tour of effective command duty in the officer's career. This would make it possible not only to employ, as battalion COs, officers who have already gone through a severe selection process and who have a chance of remaining in their command assignment for at least three years; it would also resolve those command facility and functional operational problems which likewise are connected to seniority relationships with the higher-ranking officers assigned to the various units.

In summary, this step--having a battalion commanded by a colonel, in other words--would have a twin objective: on the one hand, upgrade the basic combat unit by assigning command to reliably suitable officers; on the other hand it would also upgrade the figure of the colonel by employing him in a position which would enable him to perform effective command action.

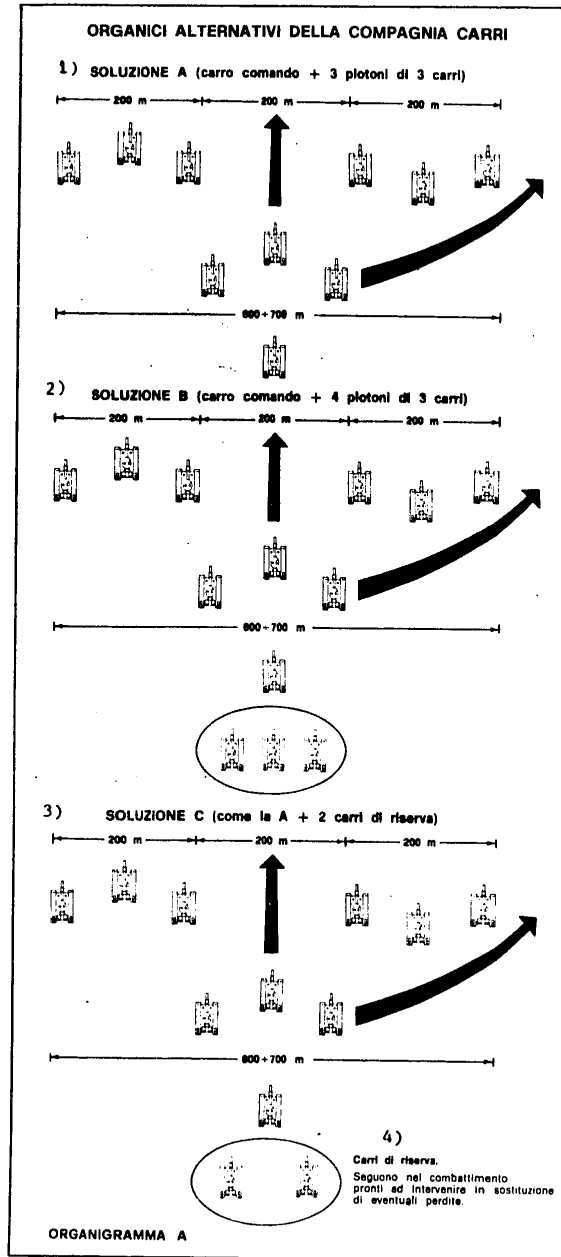
FIGURE APPENDIX

[See table on following page]

Organizational Chart A. Organizational Options for Tank Company.
Key: 1--Solution A (Command Tank Plus Three Platoons of Three Tanks, Each);
2--Solution B (Command Tanks Plus Four Platoons of Three Tanks, Each);
3--Solution C (Same as A Plus Two Tanks in Reserve); 4--Reserve tank, bringing up the rear, ready to go into action, replacing any possible losses.

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Table 1. Organizational Comparison of Solutions Proposed

1	2	3			4	5							
SOLUZIONI	ASSIGNAMENTO	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	NOTE		
		Ufficiali	Sottufficiali	Truppe	Carri comando	Carri combattenti	Motorcycles	Autoveicoli da trasporto	Autoveicoli leggeri	Autoveicoli pesanti			
15 «A»	Carro comandante di compagnia 16 Carro comando 3 17 3 carri Totale 19	1 1 3 5	— 4 6 10	3 27 27 57	1		4	1	4	5	Le due formazioni di base della compagnia («in linea» «in colonna») possono trasformarsi «a cuneo» o «a scalare».		
	15 «B»	Carro comandante di compagnia 16 Carro comando 4 18 4 carri Totale 19	1 1 4 6	— 4 8 12	3 27 39 69	1		4	1	4	5	Le due formazioni di base della compagnia («in linea» «in colonna») possono trasformarsi «a cuneo» o «a scalare».	
		15 «C»	Carro comandante di compagnia 16 Carro comando 3 17 3 carri 20 Carri di riserva Totale 19	1 1 3 — 5	— 4 6 2 12	3 27 27 6 63	1		4	1	4	5	

Key: 1--Solutions; 2--Assignment; 3--Personnel; 4--Equipment; 5--Remarks; 6--Officers; 7--NCOs; 8--EM; 9--Command tanks; 10--Battle tanks; 11--Motorcycles; 12--Recon vehicles; 13--Light armored cars; 14--Heavy armored cars; 15--Company CO's tank; 16--HQ platoon; 17--Three tank platoons; 18--Four tank platoons; 19--Totals; 20--Reserve tanks; 21--The two basic company formations ("in line," "in column") can be converted into "wedge" or "column"; 22--The two basic company formations ("in line," "in column") can be converted into "wedge" or into "echelon."

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Need for Modernization

Rome RIVISTA MILITARE in Italian Sep-Oct 79 pp 76-82

[Article by Lt Col Salvatore Sabatino: "Tank Detachments in Major Units"]

[Text] The problems involved in the organizational set up of tank units and the improvements in quality and quantity of the line of armored equipment used by the army certainly are not new. Their coverage in various and different places is not recent either, also looking at the major Western armies and the NATO and FINABEL organizations. The ideas presented by the

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author of this article therefore are part of a dialectical reality which is highly developed in terms of its manifestations and which furthermore is contradictory in terms of its solution assumptions. Requirements arising from the Italian theater of operations, the performance of the equipment as a function of constant technological progress, the funds available during future years--all of these are parameters which the Army General Staff has taken steps to tackle in order to solve this complex problem. Any increase in the number of tanks on the line can be coped with only in the context of a balanced determination of various capabilities within an instrument that is harmonized in all of its components. Similarly, the organizational setup will have to be examined from the long-term prospects of a reliable increase in the action potential in the light of available manpower resources. In this context, the article expresses the absolutely personal ideas of the author which are certainly worthy of the utmost respect but which may not be shared within a more general viewpoint that covers all of the requirements of Italy's army (editor's note).

After the failure of the Axis offensive in North Africa and during the victorious Allied advance in Cyrenaica, Winston Churchill exclaimed triumphantly in the House of Commons: "Never have so few defeated so many." The "few" were the English and the "many" were the Italians.

This defamatory statement which re-echoes the slogan of the 19th century to the effect that "the Italians won't fight" was recently corrected by another Englishman, the historian John Whittam.

It is not true, he maintains, that the Italian soldier does not know how to fight: "the complicity" of the High Command "within a regime of bluff and illusions, inadequate economic resources, and a rather inept political leadership tainted the reputation of an army which fought magnificently during World War I and which served its country well" (1).

War has its own iron laws which cannot be long ignored; when an army, no matter how numerous, is forced to fight with equipment inferior in numbers and quality, as happened during the campaign in North Africa, it is doomed to defeat.

Quality and quantity therefore are two essential components of a credible conventional military instrument. Ignoring their importance or failing to make them operative constitutes--on the political-strategic level--an attack upon national security and independence and, on the operational level, will guarantee failure.

There is no doubt and everyone agrees that the Italian army has for some time now been in need of a qualitative jump which would give it real operational efficiency.

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This criterion, as a matter of fact, in the recent past represented one of the main points behind the process of "reorganziation" and it also led to the passage of laws and modernization and updating programs, some of which are already in operation today.

But the quantitative aspect of the problem is beyond any immediate and realistic grasp at this moment; it is nevertheless an indispensable element in any deterrence which is stable in terms of time and which, in the area of conventional weapons, must be in proportion to the threat.

But that is not enough! In view of the severe restrictions springing from a tight budget which prevents the procurement of the most modern and advanced weapons systems within tight time frames, there arises the rather complacent tendency to keep the number of basic combat components unchanged, that is to say, the number of battalions, and at the same to reduce the numbers of the most expensive and most modern equipment items, entailing the risk of once again having to face the tragic consequences of North Africa.

Looking at it this way, we can say that, in case of a conflict, we would find ourselves having many major units, many battalions, on paper, on the map, but poor in the number of those that constitute the fundamental combat arms, especially battle tanks.

These are some of the thoughts that came to mind in reading the article "Tank Detachments" (2) recently published in RIVISTA MILITARE, where the reduction in the number of tanks in the platoon is considered the best solution not only in order to improve the operational efficiency of the major units (as in the case of the United States and West German studies) but also, and perhaps primarily, as a means to reduce the overall number of tanks as such in relation to the requirements of an economic nature and the consequences of the production costs." This is an arguable point because one could just as well arrive at different conclusions, in other words, for example, at the reduction of the number of guns in the artillery batteries and the special equipment units in the Engineer companies.

The truth of the matter is that financial restrictions must at the proper time lead to a reduction in the overall number of major units and battalions and not to the illusory decisions to reduce the most expensive equipment items without taking into account their operational weight in the context of the major units. A decision of this kind would mean that we are fooling ourselves and not a possible adversary.

The following remarks are designed to broaden the debate and develop it in depth by bringing out new and no less important aspects.

Major Armored Units

The major armies of the Western and Eastern countries recently went through a process of reorganizing the military establishment in order to introduce

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structural equilibrium which would be more in line with modern requirements.

Confining ourselves only to the topic under consideration, we have here some significant elements pertaining to the armored divisions, partly already introduced into the organizational structure and partly still being studied or tested.

United States of America: plans call for giving the armored division 15 battalions of the basic arm (nine tank battalions and six mechanized battalions) for a total of 360 M60 A1, A2, and A3 tanks and, soon, the XM-1;

FRG: without reducing the number of available battle tanks (277 as against the current 270), a solution has been proposed which would reduce the number of tanks in the battalion (platoon: down to three from five, company: down to 13 from 17, battalion: down to 41 from 54); on the other hand, the number of tank battalions in the division is increased from five to eight;

France and Great Britain: they constitute an abnormal case because both have dropped the brigade echelon, setting up a major unit on a real level somewhere between the division and the brigade; these major units will have, respectively, 148 medium tanks, more numerous TDs, such as AMX12, with the 90 [-mm] cannon, and the Scorpion, with the 76 [-mm] gun; but they cannot constitute a really valid model;

Soviet Union: rather than going in for a reorganization, the Soviets are introducing continuous qualitative improvements into the units, by assigning ever more modern equipment; the setup of the divisions, as a matter of fact, has remained similar to what it was in the past (with the exception of the motorized division which today has 266 tanks); the armored division has 325 T-62/72 tanks and will soon perhaps get the T-80.

This points up the fact that the number of tanks in the division is a subject of continuous increases and that the Italian armored division (276 tanks) is barely bigger (by only 10 tanks) than the Soviet motorized division. That is not all; looking at the division echelon and the ratio between personnel and the number of tanks, we find that the Italian armored division reveals the worst ratio and is not as strong as the Soviet motorized infantry division.

Now, by reducing the number of tanks, one cannot see what meaning one should assign to a division which is called an "armored division" but which is rather capriciously inferior in tanks, weapons systems, and equipment as compared to any other similar major unit, either within the Warsaw Pact or in NATO.

We cannot share the view according to which the greater power and sophistication of new combat equipment in the tank detachments could permit a reduction

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in the number of those units. The tanks in the other armies are considerably more powerful than the Italian tanks; here it suffices to realize that Soviet battle tanks have absolute superiority over Western tanks regarding armament and ammunition, not only because of the bigger caliber (3), but also because the tubes are made with the help of advanced techniques (smooth bore); besides, the rounds are fin-stabilized.

Italy's tanks on the other hand do not have any expensive advanced firing systems and they do not have any of the qualitative improvements made in the Leopard 2, Leopard 2AV and M60 A3 tanks; they are furthermore forced to stop in order to fire. That is not true of the most modern tanks already issued to the other armies, including some Eastern countries, whose units are not familiar with the technique of fire and movement and which fire while the tank is in motion--although at reduced speed--with a high probability of hitting the target with the first round.

The Threat and the Operational Environment

The solution to operational problems must start with a knowledge of the enemy.

Following an offensive strategic concept, the ground forces of the Warsaw Pact consider offensive action the only form of combat capable of achieving decisive results.

Faithful to the basic principles of the blitzkrieg, they call for conducting an attack with armored forces powerfully sustained by massive and concentrated fire in narrow sectors to overcome the defenses and advance rapidly in depth.

This outlook is backed up by the substance of the most common major unit, the so-called motorized division, which, with 266 tanks, 388 APCs (4), 165 pieces of artillery, and about 700 rocket-launcher tubes (saturation weapons), in addition to numerous tactical and logistic support units, implements a tank-infantry ratio which is almost 1:1.

Offensive action moreover involves a considerable narrowing of the envelopments fronts and a contraction of formations in meeting a reduced risk of nuclear strikes deriving from the wide availability of tactical missiles on both sides. An armored division on the attack, with 325 tanks, is supposed to achieve a "break through" in the defenses by concentrating four tank battalions in the first echelon along a front of 3-4 km, followed by another five battalions in the second and third echelons. If we finally look at the second line we can see that the Warsaw Pact, on a front of about 10 km, concentrates another 600 battle tanks in several echelons.

And now:

Either we think that the Italian lineup does not permit an effort of this kind in any sector (and in that case we would be able to perform only surveillance functions for Italian territory);

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Or we realize that there might still exist some sector suitable for a concentrated and [illegible word in photostat] effort in terms of a "break through" that may have happened in advanced positions, so that Italy's [illegible word in photostat] could counter the threat with the fruitful employment, in depth, of its powerful armored units.

If we are convinced, as NATO is, that the real situation is the one outlined in the second case, then it seems to make more sense to prepare a rather reduced number of units [illegible in photostat] which however will be qualitatively suitable for putting up, in threatened sectors, a concentration equal to the concentration of the attacking forces, rather than being weak everywhere, but showing so many little flags on the map supposedly representing armored units.

But there is more!

Although with a certain margin of uncertainty, broad estimates indicate that the volume of the threat against the Italian deployment would come to 10,000 tanks and TDs plus 2,500 artillery pieces, heavy mortars, and rocket launchers.

How are we going to counter that?

Even if we analyze the well-known ratio of 1:3 between defense and attack in a simplified and rather debatable manner, we must say that the Italian army, considering what it currently has available, does need to increase rather than reduce the number of its tanks and AT weapons.

Looking at the operational environment, it does not seem that it can be grasped except in the form of the field where the offensive and defensive efforts of opposing forces will be made--forces which will exploit the characteristics of that field as best they can.

In many sections, the Italian operational environment does not differ from many others where it is believed that armored forces could operate successfully. In particular, it permits the employment of all AT weapons systems (including the high-velocity and rapid-firing gun of the armored car), long-range and medium-range missiles as well as rockets for close-in work. Besides, the large percentage of targets in a range between 1,000 and 2,000 m (40%) makes us think that the basic weapons in AT combat must have a high probability of hitting and destroying enemy tanks up to a range of as much as 2,000 m. That of course includes the gun of the present-day battle tank to which, because of the well-known shortage of mechanized equipment, we must also assign AT and anti-TD missions.

We therefore cannot agree with the statement to the effect that the operational environment necessitates "thinning out the overall density of tanks." The latter certainly expresses some of the features of the natural environment but is closely tied to the way in which we plan to employ the armored units.

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Action Methods

In facing a threat which adopts the action procedures previously described, the defense must have the capability of countermaneuvering early in order to counteract the attack concentration with its own defensive power concentration. To achieve that, the defense today more than ever before needs fire power, mobility, and protection [armor]; and the tank, more than any other piece of fighting equipment, still meets those requirements.

Modern AT weapons systems--which according to some people should have brought about the end of the tank--certainly are necessary for effective defense but by themselves they constitute a rather rigid lineup with little mobility and wide gaps which cannot guarantee a tight defense; besides they have a very low rate of fire.

Only the tank can resolve the issue of defense combat, but not from the conventional viewpoint of "massive and powerful counterattack" aimed at throwing enemy penetration forces back and deciding the issue. This vision, in the light of lessons learned during World War II, when the defense above all had to stop an infantry attack, can no longer be accepted today because, as we said, the connotations of the attack have changed and with them there has been a change in the reality of the modern battlefield. In spite of this, many people still stick to the old traditions and many old thinking patterns are still oriented toward parade-ground tactics, abstract and geometrical, made up of offensive and defensive action procedures which would be identical for each adversary, ranging from the most powerful and modern to the most traditional and modest.

We must instead realize that armored units will rarely be able, in combat, to adopt "geometrical textbook formations," deriving from tactical regulations based on the standards in the 700 Series now mostly outdated in terms of concept and procedures.

The modern battlefield assigns tasks to the tank in addition to the traditional one. And one can understand this by carefully reading Publication 900.

The doctrine of the principal Western armies today fully relies on the tank's defensive capabilities, calling for its employment in all situations where it is possible to utilize the peculiar technical-tactical characteristics of the tank, not only in the valuable reserve position to be kept "on hand" and to be sent into action during the final phase of combat. Tank units can be used to seal breakthroughs and to drive back or stop penetrations, to conduct dynamic counterthrusts and to lay ambushes in order, along with mechanized units, to help support the most critical sectors in our main line of resistance, not only from the rearmost position but also and above all in the most advanced sectors, that is to say, during the first echelons of defense (5). This last-mentioned assignment in particular is all the more necessary if we consider the shortages--in terms

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of AT weapons numbers and quality--of Italy's mechanized units which are today still forced to rely heavily on the recoilless 106 [-mm] rifle and the bazooka.

The battle tank--a real mobile AT system--therefore must become a part of the defensive AT fabric. That obviously does not rule out the possibility of using the tank in a "counterattack" where the situation so permits, in other words, when there are still high probabilities of success, possibly in the nature of resolving the entire issue reliably (and that is the case where, for example, it is necessary to regain and support positions whose loss would damage the integrity of the entire defense system) or when it is a good idea to exploit a favorable circumstance offered by an error on the part of the enemy.

Organizational Problems

Parallel to the evolution of action methods, the organizational structure of the tank detachment has always been the subject of debate, studies and modification proposals.

The arguments have always been under discussion and, over a period of time, involved the following aspects: tank platoon with three, four, or five tanks (6), next, a company with three, four, or five platoons and, in the final analysis, big battalions or small battalions.

We must say right away in this connection that every solution entails advantages and disadvantages.

The advantage offered by "the three-tank platoon" formula--in addition to the obvious advantage of easier command--is that the major unit, with an equal overall number of tanks, has more platoons and therefore has greater employment flexibility. This formula however reduces the unit's operational capability and means that the succession of fire and movement is shifted from the company echelon which thus becomes an elementary tank battle unit.

The five-tank solution is more economical and offers similar advantages and disadvantages with respect to those inherent in the preceding solution.

The four-tank platoon presents the previously outlined advantages and disadvantages and comes up as an intermediate solution between the two preceding solutions; but that does not mean that it should be considered less suitable (7).

The real problem however is a different one. It is a question of economics. Since a further reduction in the total number of tanks in the reorganized army is unacceptable, the idea of raising small tank battalions, with lighter basic combat units, necessarily entails an increase in the command and logistics support facilities; but that means that we would need more officers and NCOs, more specialists on the company echelon, more command and control equipment, more battalion orderly, more resupply and recovery platoons, more spare parts sections, etc.

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This kind of solution furthermore would certainly have an effect on the training sector (larger number of firing exercises, need for greater availability of firing ranges and ammunition, different training method for tank platoons, etc.), as well as the employment of minor components and cooperating mechanized equipment and, finally, the tactical balance between the various components of the operational instruments (a larger number of tank battalions presumably will require the reorganization of the mechanized battalion and certainly also the artillery group).

The Americans and the Germans have become aware of this situation and, although they have considerable funds available, they nevertheless are trying to transform the five-tank platoon because that would cost more.

Generally speaking, therefore, it seems we may say that the solution involving light elementary units and small battalions should not be preferred over the current solution although it does present undisputed positive aspects in terms of employment in combat. Modern guidelines however are pointing toward big battalions precisely for reasons of economy.

Conclusion

The military problems of our time undoubtedly are complex and call for in-depth analyses and careful evaluation. The problem complex taken up here, in particular, involves the vital interests of the Italian army because the importance of the battle tank in modern combat is vital; that is underscored by its massive presence in all modern armies.

It is correct and necessary to seek the new operational concept in structural formulas, in problems of supply and logistics and in all sectors of interest to Italy's military establishment.

The problem involved in the reduction of the tank platoon certainly deserves attention and study on the part of anyone who has taken the future of tank detachments to heart--provided, of course, that this is not a pretext to bring about an overall reduction of the current number of tanks with the risk of repeating the sad and humiliating experiences of World War II.

FOOTNOTES

1. John Whittam, "Storia dell'Esercito italiano" [History of the Italian Army], Rizzoli Publishers.
2. A. Azais, "Tank Detachments," RIVISTA MILITARE, No 3, 1979.
3. Most of the NATO battle tanks are equipped with the 105 [-mm] guns (with the exception of the British tanks who adopted the 120 caliber). Soviet tanks have 155 and 125 caliber muzzles.

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4. The Soviet APC [BMP], a tracked fighting vehicle armed with a 73-mm AT gun, effective up to 1,000 m, a SAGGER missile system with a range of up to 3,000 m, one 7.62-mm machine gun, and a STRELA AA missile system.
5. Steps already approved by the doctrine of the armies of the United States, the Soviet Union, and the FRG.
6. Recently a French author strongly supported the idea of the six-tank platoon.
7. The British, who are the inventors of the tank and of tank tactics, have adopted the four-tank platoon. Following a recent step, the tank platoon in the Soviet motorized division was increased from three tanks to four tanks.

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COUNTRY SECTION

ITALY

STATUS OF BILATERAL TRADE RELATIONS WITH ALBANIA

Milan IL SOLE-24 ORE in Italian 13 Dec 79 p 17

[Article by E. P.: "Italy and Albania Develop Trade"]

[Text] Rome. As had been announced, Albanian Foreign Trade Minister Nedin Hoxha--whose last name is the same as that of President Enver Hoxha--met recently at the Foreign Trade Ministry with our Minister Stammati to discuss the situation of bilateral foreign trade. They examined the progress of economic relations informally because there has been no Italo-Albanian foreign trade or cooperation agreement since the beginning of 1975 when the EEC trade policy entered into effect in countries with state-controlled foreign trade.

Nevertheless, even though the final report signed at the end of the talks contains nothing new, something interesting is emerging. In fact, Albania is looking for new business partners, especially neighbors, and the substantial nature of some current negotiations regarding supply of Italian machinery against the purchase of Albanian raw materials makes it possible that in the long run something may be done to carry forward the discussions concerning the balanced development of the two lines of traffic.

Italo-Albanian reciprocal trade in 1978 involved imports of 11.5 billion lire against exports totaling 10.9 billion. In the first 6 months of this year there has been some improvement: Imports totaled 11.8 billion while exports leveled out at 4.3 billion. It is expected that an overall ceiling of 30 billion lire will be reached by the end of the year.

Italian businessmen interested in the Albanian market--and particularly those who desire to buy ferronickel or other minerals Albania is particularly rich in--hope that soon the desire to increase trade between the two countries can be translated into reality.

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COUNTRY SECTION

ITALY

VENEZUELA TO SUPPLY 5 TO 10 MILLION TONS OF CRUDE OIL IN 1980

Turin LA STAMPA in Italian 13 Dec 79 pp 1, 24

[Article: "Venezuela Doubles Petroleum Supply"]

[Text] Half the shortfall in petroleum supply caused by the suspension of the Saudi Arabian contract with ENI [National Hydrocarbons Agency] will be covered by Venezuela.

The news was released to newspapermen yesterday afternoon by Budget Minister Andreatta. He specified that the Venezuelan decision follows an agreement on bilateral cooperation initialed last 1 December.

The agreement, which involves the doubling of present crude oil supplies presently totaling 2.5 million tons will be completed before the end of this month by direct contract between the two governments based on a formula, Andreatta said, which "inaugurates a new contractual policy directly negotiated on the government level."

The supplies of Venezuelan crude will rise next year to 5 million tons with the further possibility--already being studied by Caracas authorities--of additional increases with the framework of the bilateral cooperative agreement.

In making the terms of the agreement public, Andreatta, speaking in the name of the Italian Government, thanked the Venezuelan Government for the effort made in a very few days in bringing this first phase of the implementation of the agreement to a conclusion precisely when that government was involved in negotiating the reduction in the supply of crude oil abroad as a result of domestic decisions to decrease the production of crude.

During the morning the government dealt with general energy problems at Palazzo Chigi in the course of a meeting of the "Interministerial Energy Group," with particular reference to the supply of petroleum. According to Budget Minister Andreatta, the Italian problem involves about 20 percent of total need (which is estimated at 103 million tons). Andreatta said that "we will procure 80 percent through existing contracts, while the remaining 20 percent must be purchased on the free market." Andreatta said:

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"The problem is serious and must be assessed in all its aspects, not excluding that regarding the price mechanism." However, difficulties will arise in the most important way for the first 3 months of the year, but are less pressing with a tendency toward stabilization, in later months. Andreatta believes that in the process of setting prices for crude, Italy must take into account the conditions offered by free markets, and that negotiations must take place with the companies to reach a uniform pricing system that will be the result of an average between the 80 percent obtained through contracts and 20 percent obtained on the free market.

However, the budget minister has a position that is rather distant from the apocalyptic forecasts of his colleague Lombardini: "The problem can be controlled," he said, describing as a "masterprice" the administration of price control in Italy in 1979. "We saved between 1,000 and 2,000 billion lire," he concluded, "so much so that the trade balance will close with a credit of 1,000 billion lire. But this masterpiece cannot be repeated forever." The energy committee was chaired by Prime Minister Cossiga.

In addition to Andreatta others participating in the meeting were Ministers Bisaglia, Stammati, Reviglio, Lombardini and ENEL [National Electric Power Agency] President Corbellini, ENI Commissioner Egidi and high officials of the ministries concerned.

In any case the meeting left many uncertainties; the only certainty is that the prices will rise soon, but no one knows by how much. A clarification was requested by the entire radical group of the Chamber with an interrogation to the prime minister, "to learn if he does not consider it opportune to promote a meeting between the minister of industry and minister of state participations in the attempt, which promises to be difficult, to find an agreement between them on the amount of the so-called energy shortfall for 1980." The radicals recall that the shortfall, according to statements by ministers, "will range somewhere around the following figures: 15, 23, 26, 28 and 30 million tons."

In reality, from what has been learned from the many and not always compatible statements by ministers, the need for the coming year is expected to be 103 million tons of crude. The expected deficit will be around 23 million tons, to which could be added an additional 5 million tons in case Saudi Arabia should confirm the suspension of the contract with ENI. According to Minister Lombardini, the deficit could even rise above 30 million tons in case of "new disturbances in the Middle East." Andreatta's forecasts instead do not go beyond a deficit of about 20 to 21 million tons.

While no one knows or can indicate with certainty the extent of the shortfall, uncertainty is increased by the lack of a reply by Saudi Arabia to the letter by Prime Minister Cossiga with a request for a meeting "at the highest level" to solve the problem of the suspension of supplies. The Italian ambassador in Jidda, Alberto Solera, at the end of last week delivered the message to Crown Prince Fahd, but until last night there was no reply by Saudi Arabia.

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In reality the task of reversing the suspension does not seem easy, while the matter of supplies paid for at the termination of the contract is still very much open. Presumably the Saudi Government will await developments in the matter which at the moment do not seem near at hand.

The picture is worsened by increases in the price of crude which OPEC is preparing to decide upon in its Caracas meeting set for the beginning of next week. The extent of the increase could be around 30 percent, according to widespread opinions; the negative effect of such an increase would be extremely harsh for the Western economies and would have unforeseeable consequences.

From what has been said the increase in the domestic price of petroleum products seems inescapable and this position was repeated again yesterday by Industry Minister Bisaglia in an interview with ASCA. Bisaglia said that the government as a whole should decide how to apply the price increases and must "find consensus for a policy of sacrifices. We are against inflation, against the effects it produces on workers, but there is no alternative to the price increases." To decide what prices should be increased "it is necessary to study differentiated increases with the object of reducing inflationary effects to the minimum," explained the minister. He added that, "if for example the increase in the price of gasoline is translated only into an increase in the tax quota, no result would be obtained from the point of view of the necessary supplies to cover the energy shortfall."

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COUNTRY SECTION

SPAIN

PM SUAREZ REPORTEDLY WILL NOT MAKE CABINET CHANGES

Madrid CAMBIO 16 in Spanish 23 Dec 79 p 21

[Article by Jose Oneto: "The Crisis"]

[Text] The head of government, Adolfo Suarez, will not reorganize his Cabinet for the time being, according to sources close to Moncloa Palace. Despite the fact that in the past few days rumors have grown stronger as have the pressures on the head of government to introduce "new blood" into an executive which, despite only 8 months in office, finds that some of its ministers (Education, Interior, Territorial Administration, and so on) are in trouble, the Prime Minister does not plan for the time being to cause a crisis.

The same impression exists in well-informed circles of the government party where some of the latest rumors of crises have originated.

In addition, in official circles and banking circles the rumors that have circulated during the past few days suggesting a confrontation between the representatives of the seven major banks and Moncloa Palace have been received with great skepticism.

In banking circles it is noted that there is no "corporate belligerence" against the government or against the economic team. According to these denied rumors, the presidents of the seven major banks who meet regularly every Monday in Madrid reportedly signified to the head of government, Adolfo Suarez, the need to change the 2nd deputy prime minister for economic affairs, Fernando Abril Martorell, to replace the first deputy prime minister for defense affairs, Lt Gen Manuel Gutierrez Mellado, and to establish a portfolio for a political deputy prime minister whose only goal would be to provide greater coherence to the plans and decisions of the government. These rumors even mentioned the possible appointment of Antonio Garrigues Walker as deputy prime minister for economic affairs as the first step toward concerting the manager into a possible "cover" in the face of an institutional crisis.

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- In these banking circles it is stressed that the meetings with the head of government have been minimal (except in isolated instances and on extremely rare occasions) and that these alleged pressures lack basis and would not have any effect.

The bankers are only concerned--the same sources add--about an excessively stringent monetary policy and some political decisions, but overall they support the actions of the government.

- Furthermore, these circles believe that Fernando Abril Martorell is the lesser of all the evils and they are of the opinion that on the whole he is carrying out the only economic policy that can be pursued. The earlier differences with the deputy prime minister for economic affairs have not only been overcome but there is a certain degree of support for the economic policy that has been developing since Castellana 3.

- Only the departure of Fernando Abril Martorell or his appointment as deputy prime minister for political affairs (a possibility discarded for the time being by Prime Minister Suarez despite the difficulties experienced by the economic deputy prime minister) would give meaning to a ministerial crisis.

- A crisis would make sense, it is felt in other circles of the government party disgusted by the manner in which they are being led and by the constant political improvisation of the Prime Minister, if there really were a desire to effect an important change in the existing situation. Contrariwise, it is stressed, it makes no sense to change two or three ministers but continue to follow the same policy.

- A shift in policy is demanded forcefully and steadily by certain sectors which continue to note the constant government concessions under pressure and the constant "concealment" of the power wielded by Prime Minister Adolfo Suarez and which has managed to infect his colleagues. If not, think of the dramatic situation of a minister of interior who for weeks has contemplated how all types of Spanish and foreign journalists and informers have made indirect contact with the kidnappers of Mr Ruperez who has not even been able to explain to public opinion what it is that has taken place during this month-long kidnapping.

- In every way nothing indicates at this time that the head of government intends to change his ministers. In order to pursue the same policy Adolfo Suarez, who alone continues to have full confidence in Fernando Abril Martorell, does not have any reason to shake up his team because it is probable that he will never have such a submissive, disciplined government with such a lack of critical faculty--with very few exceptions--as the one which he has now.

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COUNTRY SECTION

SPAIN

SOME UCD FACTIONS REPORTEDLY LOOKING FOR NEW LEADERSHIP

Madrid CAMBIO 16 in Spanish 16 Dec 79 p 15

[Text] In some sectors of the government party thought is being given to a replacement for Adolfo Suarez, president of the UCD [Democratic Center Union] and head of the government, according to reports coming out of various meetings and conferences that have been taking place in Madrid in recent weeks.

One of the most important gatherings was a meeting held a little more than 2 weeks ago by about 30 persons--among them 15 men who are members of the Congress and Senate--presided over by the minister of justice, Inigo Caverio, and by the former president of Congress, Fernando Alvarez de Miranda.

The meeting was held in the Club 24 in Madrid, and was not attended by Landelino Lavilla, president of the Congress of Deputies, although he was invited. It centered on the present-day political situation in Spain, the internal condition of the UCD and the possibility of finding a replacement for the current president of the government and of the party, Adolfo Suarez.

The participants included the former minister of finance, Alberto Monreal Luque, Luis de Grande, Mariano Alierta, Juan Antonio Gomez Angulo, Jose Luis Alonso Almodovar, Joaquin Galan, Antonio Masa, prof Angel Vegas, and the former secretary of Congress Jose Luis Ruiz Navarro; who are all members of the Christian Democratic family, and are at this time considered to be out of favor in the UCD.

The natural leader of this sector, Suarez' "heir apparent," would be the current president of Congress and former minister of justice, Landelino Lavilla, the only christian democrat who, according to them, is tolerated by the rest of the factions who form the government party.

It appears that Mr Lavilla, who received detailed reports of the meeting, has declined for the moment to head any kind of alternative or faction.

The other possible pretender would be the former minister of finance, Francisco Fernandez Ordonez, the originator of the fiscal reform, who had to

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leave the government because of confrontations with President Suarez and with Vice-President Fernando Abril Martorell. Fernandez Ordonez, however, has little by little been losing control of the social-democratic group, since many of his men (Gonzalez Seara, Carlos Bustelo, Juan Antonio Garcia Diez, Rafael Arias Salgado...) are now nearer to Suarez' than to his political positions.

Joaquin Garrigues, the third "pretender," one of the most brilliant ministers sitting at the Council table, does not appear inclined, for personal reasons, to head any kind of leadership. Finally, the last candidate would be the former minister of the interior, Rodolfo Martin Villa, an intimate colleague of President Suarez, during the political transition, a key man in the party's future, but with the tremendous handicap of his background (it is unlikely that in the future they will again choose from the same source), and of his career in the ministry of the interior, which seriously affected his political image.

When the list is studied, it is clear, from a totally impartial point of view, that at this time there is no alternative to Suarez, and that to try to invent a replacement before 1983 could be political suicide for the government party.

The "barons" of the party also appear to have arrived at this conclusion; they are worried about the serious situation in the country and the no less serious condition of the party, which still continues to be only a machine for elections and not an authentic party of cadres.

From what is known, the view of the "barons," which soon could be expressed in a formal meeting with the president, is to set up a permanent committee of the UCD which would replace the unworkable 40-person executive committee.

This permanent committee would lay down the lines of action, and in any case would criticize the work of the president when it did not conform to what the party has established.

Although he is criticized more and more for lack of communication, for the absence of explanations and for not having a medium and long-range plan of action, Adolfo Suarez continues to be the leader of the UCD. Inside the party, despite the tensions being produced by the autonomies and the personalist presidential policy, they still maintain that at this time there is no alternative to Suarez, and that it is foolish to hastily think of a replacement, of an "heir," in view of the political capital which the current president continues to possess.

Indeed, what can be radically changed or, at least, what the different UCD factions are going to try to change is the method of governing a country like Spain during the current crisis, with an almost complete lack of authority and objectives.

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COUNTRY SECTION

SPAIN

PSOE 'MODERATES' SAID TO CONTROL PROVINCIAL ORGANS

Madrid CAMBIO 16 in Spanish 23 Dec 79 pp 29,31

[Article: "Felipe Gonzalez and Hail Spain!"]

[Text] Like a stormy northwestern blast the imminence of the Socialist regional congresses was agitating waters, reactivating personal confrontations, and stirring ideological polemics. With the close of the meetings and the election of the new executives, calm returned once again.

The triumph of the moderate factions in the elections of the secretaries general of the PSOE [Spanish Socialist Workers Party] of Andalusia and Madrid--the federation most critical of the present executive--strengthens the political line of Felipe Gonzalez and gives greater internal coherence to the Socialist Party.

However, in Catalonia internal fights continue. The secretary general of the PSOE does not wish to intervene from outside, and a call for a truce until the holding of elections to the Catalanian parliament seems to be the temporary solution.

At 0430 hours at dawn on Monday, 10 December 1979, a vote was finally taken for the new executive of the FSM [Socialist Federation of Madrid], the most numerous in the country. The Congress of Madrid Socialists, with moments of great tension and harsh confrontations, did not manage to reach agreement to elect a single candidate. Each of the three factions presented its own slate.

With a margin of only 300 votes the executive which ran Josquin Leguina (2,700 votes) as secretary general of the FSM won over Alonso Puerta (2,400 votes), Carlos Lopez Riano (1,800 votes), and nearly 1,000 abstentions.

In the classifying language, necessary to understand and position the internal actions of the PSOE, the "moderates" or "felipistas" [followers of Felipe Gonzalez] had won the battle over the followers of the "Third Alternative" and the "Critics" [of the PSOE]. The great losers at the time of

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electing representatives for the Special PSOE Congress of September 1979-- known at that time as those of "The 59 Theses"--were finally the unexpected winners. For the first time Felipe Gonzalez has a team congenial to his projects in the traditionally most influential bastion of the PSOE.

In Seville, also in the long night of Sunday, the Congress of Andalusian Socialists solved its problems: Jose Rodriguez de la Borbolla was elected secretary general of the PSOE-A [Andalusia], a new designation which replaces that of Socialist Federation of Andalusia.

The slogan "Autonomy--A Socialist Commitment" held sway over the Second Congress of the PSOE-A. But at its meeting other, more important tricks were played than support for autonomy on which all those attending were in agreement. In reality, the access to power of new factions was aided when difficulties between nationalists and non-nationalists were overcome.

But if in Madrid and Andalusia the respective congresses settled tensions in a democratic manner and again everything grew calm, in Catalonia the crisis of the Socialists continued.

Turkish Bath of Madrid

Personalities and political disagreements do not merely face the two sectors which were established to form the PSC-PSOE [Socialist Party of Catalonia-PSOE] but the dissensions also affect the UGT [General Union of Workers] and the Socialist Youths. With the Socialist home thus shaken up all its policy vis-a-vis the Catalanian parliament has become paralyzed while the other parties are watching patiently to see whether the Socialists explain themselves.

The Congress of the FSM already began making a supreme effort when the administration of the outgoing executive headed by Alonso Puerta was overwhelmingly rejected by 6,000 negative votes to no more than 90 favorable ballots.

Alonso Puerta, the second deputy mayor of the municipality of Madrid, had to sustain the tormenting downpour of criticism of the executive of which he used to be the secretary general: Lack of political planning by the federation, discontent with the municipal electoral lists and those of deputies, lack of coordination among the towns of the province, favoritism, and attempts to use municipal power.

Already easing the discontent of members with up to then their own leaders-- "the self-criticism of the creeps must be a light shower compared to this Turkish bath," a member of the executive noted--Sunday night's fever took hold in the election of the new members of the executive organ.

Agreements were tried between two or three groups. The three-way agreement broke down because the followers of the "Third Alternative"--whose

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designation seemed to indicate that it could serve as a bridge between the other two groups--refused to negotiate with the "Moderates of Leguina. Proposals for agreement between the "Critics" of Lopez Riano and the followers of the "Third Alternative" of Alonso Puerta were interminable but failed in the end.

Both strived to find a joint candidacy and Puerta managed to offer to the other group a majority of names including the post of secretary general. For 3 hours the faction of "Critics" met behind closed doors with Luis Gomez Llorente and Pablo Castellano to discuss the offer.

But everything was in vain. The "Critics" had entered a dead-end street: To maintain their political coherence they found themselves unable to support Alonso Puerta and re-elect him when on the previous day they had unanimously voted against his continuing in office. The result was that the "Critics" split in two. "We enter whole and come out divided," Lopez Riano noted dramatically in his closing speech.

With all negotiation cast aside, the three complete slates for the positions in the executive were subjected to the verdict of the ballot boxes. But victory had already been proclaimed. The lack of agreement which had splintered the "Critics" and set back the followers of Puerta and his group gave an un hoped-for victory to those who began as losers, namely, the "Moderates."

Joaquin Leguina, the new secretary general of the FSM, 38 years old, an economist, a former member of the FLP [Peoples Liberation Front], and adviser of ex-President Salvador Allende of Chile, told CAMBIO 16:

"These three factions began at the time of the two earlier congresses. The important thing now is to prevent their becoming crystallized as a pressure group and to ease the situation. We made an effort to seek an agreement among the three factions, but Alonso Puerta refused to go along. They can start settling their problems in the Regional Committee."

Andalusia: Just Plain Socialists

Late and forcefully Rafael Escuredo, president of the Board of Andalusia, wanted to have the upper hand in the Congress of Andalusian Socialists. Equipped with the thesis of "Andalusian nationalism" he entered the Los Lebreles Hotel of Seville where the Congress was held with the purpose of finding support, which he failed to do.

Politically in the minority Escuredo even managed to threaten to resign if he failed to drive home his position. His attitude bothered most of the delegates who did not see clearly his claim that they should vote for him as president of the PSOE-A.

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In a last-ditch move he managed to propose the post of honorary president of the party in Andalusia for himself as the president of the Board, but all the delegations rejected the idea.

As a final effort on Sunday evening, it was decided to support the initiatives of the Board of Andalusia by means of a decree read publicly.

This pledge of support compensated Escuredo for his bitter misfortunes while it served to encourage his administration, if not ideologically at least collectively and publicly. The tension eased and there were no other problems. Rodriguez de la Borbolla himself gave assurances in his speech that "the party of the nationalist socialists and the just plain Socialists" would come out on top at the Congress.

Senador Borbolla, the outgoing secretary general who was subsequently re-elected, saw his tenure approved by 61 percent of the votes in favor and 25 percent against.

Fairly routine by the various reports on which the 220 delegates from the eight provinces had worked under the direction of Manuel Chaves, who chaired the Congress' officers with skill, were approved. As for the by-laws, the most important decision was to rename the Andalusian federation which from then on was to be called Spanish Socialist Workers Party of Andalusia, or PSOE-A.

The opening speech of the Andalusian congress fell to Felipe Gonzalez who, once more, tried to play the role of unifier. "The identity of Andalusia," he said, "goes beyond Andalusian borders and stands above what can be produced in a discussion of ideas." Later he said that "the top most expression of Socialism is summed up in that Spain will be a country of national groups." And he declared his readiness to pressure the government so that the Andalusian referendum may be held on 28 February 1980.

Felipe Gonzalez concluded his speech stating that "we can secure the government in a region or nationality but if we do not win state power we shall not have won the battle of Socialism." In the closing speech Alfonso Guerra asserted that "the Andalusian Socialists have emerged from the Congress strengthened and united."

Call for Truce

But the place where there does not seem to be unity and where even weakness has grown is in the Catalanian Socialist party. The PSC [Socialist Party of Catalonia], federated with the PSOE, is suffering from permanent internal political tensions which, from time to time, crop out on the surface more forcefully even though so far it has been possible to avoid any irreparable break.

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The disputing factions have taken a stand around the "unitary" stance of Raimon Obiols, a member of the majority faction in the party and who is tacitly supported by its secretary general, Joan Reventos, and the partisans of Jose Maria Triginer, hailing from the old PSOE and who finds his support in the Catalanian UGT. As the third faction in discord the "Critics," divided and very much in a minority, support the Obiols followers.

The most recent tensions among these groups have managed to create such strong ill feeling within the party that they obliged Joan Reventos to make a call for a truce before the elections of the Catalanian parliament next spring. Reventos wishes to avoid the deterioration of the party's image before it is too late.

To the UGT dispute, settled through expedients and sanctions which the federation committee of the UGT rejects and the general assembly of the Catalanian trade union affirms, has been added another controversy among the Socialist Youths of Catalonia. The credentials committee of the Catalanian Socialist Youths where the pro-Triginer supporters are well positioned opposed the 26 delegates from Barcelona who attended the preparatory meeting of the next Congress of Socialist Youths. This led to 31 more delegates abandoning the conference, which has found itself practically without a quorum.

During the night of 10 December 1979 the national executive of the PSC unanimously approved a work program "to face the schedule of the next few months." The agreement of the executive mentions the need to inform the activists, measures respecting internal discussion, and the preparation of the elections. The executive personally entrusted to Joan Reventos the duty of executing the agreements and responsibility for party-trade union relations.

The policy agreements contained in the document had an immediate impact among the followers of Jose Maria Triginer, very stubborn about reaching an understanding with the communists of the PSUC [Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia] in the recently emerging picture of authority for Catalalonia.

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